

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1927

GARDEN NOTES

Number One

Issued by

LEE R. BONNEWITZ

Van Wert, Ohio

LIBRARY
RECEIVED

★ AUG 29 1927 ★

U. S. Department of Agriculture

I am a Dry Goods merchant and senior member of "THE BONNEWITZ CO." and my life work has been the building up of a good retail business in our town of 8,000 population.

I am still in the Dry Goods Store or rather in the Department Store, for our business has grown very satisfactorily, and successful Dry Goods Stores naturally grow into Department Stores. Now while the management of a Dry Goods Store has been my business, Peonies have been my hobby, and during the past fifteen years I have built up a Peony collection of over nine hundred varieties, among them the very finest varieties in all the world.

My first purchase was made at the suggestion of my wife, to whom I must give all the credit for my interest in flowers, and who was a great help to me in studying the hundreds of varieties and in making our displays at all the National Peony Shows. That first purchase—what an important event it was! And how long it took Mrs. Bonnewitz to make up my mind to spend as much as Ten Dollars on such foolish things as flowers!

But at last she had me place my name on the dotted line, and here is the order I signed:

13	Pink	Peonies	@	25c
13	Red	Peonies	@	25c
14	White	Peonies	@	25c

— 40 — Peonies @ 25c = \$10.00

The second June following, when our Peonies were at their best, we were very proud of our big collection. But there was one fly in the ointment, for a neighbor who had only a half dozen plants had one Peony for which she had paid fifty cents, and we could plainly see that her fifty-cent one was much better than any of our twenty-five cent ones.

It was not such hard work, and it did not take Mrs. Bonnewitz as long to persuade me to order some of the fifty-

Garden Notes Number One

cent ones, for of course we wanted to have just as fine Peonies as anybody.

Two surprises awaited us the next year, for in another neighbor's garden we found two most exquisite Peonies, *Madame De Verneville* and *Duchesse De Nemours*. The first surprise was that the really fine Peonies have names of their own, and the second surprise was that some Peonies cost as much as a dollar.

That was our first introduction to the named varieties, and that year we saw our first Peony catalog and purchased ten of the named varieties, being very careful to select those with the most beautiful and aristocratic names.

The next June was an eventful one in our Peony experience, for then it was we saw our first *M. Jules Elie*, and I can no more tell you the thoughts which went surging through my mind as I gazed upon that wonderful bloom than you, if you are a Peony enthusiast, can tell me your sensations when you first beheld it. It remains today as one of the really great Peonies of the world.

Two years later I was invited to visit a garden to see a new Peony, a Peony which a lady in Indiana had grown from a seed, and the memory of the thrill I received when I saw my first *Jubilee* will remain with me as long as I live. I threw my hat on the ground, and instantly offered the owner Ten Dollars (an unheard-of price at that time) for it, but it was not for sale and money would not buy it. It took me two years to get my first *Jubilee* and this is how I did it. I wrote to Mr. Shaylor and asked him for a list of the Peonies which he considered the best in the world. Here is the list he sent me, and it is a mighty good list today:

*Alma, Le Jour, Kelway's Glorious, Philippe Rivoire,
Frances Shaylor, William F. Turner and Kelway's
Exquisite*

I immediately ordered one each of these Peonies from Mr. Shaylor and when they arrived I gave a division from each one of them to the owner of *Jubilee*, and in return I received a *Jubilee*, to be my very own. It has been one of the great pleasures of my life to take *Jubilee* with me to the National Shows of The American Peony Society, and hear the expressions of surprise, pleasure, wonder and delight from the visitors at the show who see my Peony for the first time.

I should not say "my" Peony, for it is Mrs. Pleas's Peony for she developed it from the seed, and yet I take no offense when I am spoken of as the "*Jubilee*" man, and I hear that expression quite often.

Garden Notes Number Thirteen

LEE R. BONNEWITZ

Van Wert, Ohio

The love of Peonies and the desire to grow them usually take possession of a person like an inspiration. Yesterday we hardly knew what the word "Peony" meant. Today we see a most wonderful flower which has been grown in our own climate, and we become possessed with a desire to grow it in our own garden. Upon investigation we find a multitude of catalogues with a wealth of information, most of which is written for the benefit of the advanced Peony enthusiast. This issue of my Garden Notes, however, is written for the benefit of men and women who have seen magnificent Peony blooms at the shows, and those who have heard and read of the beauty of the Peony, but who have never seen the plants growing in a garden.

Peony gardens are started by purchasing roots which continually grow larger from season to season, and which may be divided every two or three years, and each division thus made, if it possesses even a single eye or sprout will in three or four years become a full sized Peony plant, capable of producing as good blooms as any other plant of the same variety. Plants grown from divisions of roots always produce the same kind of blooms as the original plant. Seeds, however, will produce plants altogether different from the plant from which the seeds were obtained, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the blooms on these plants will not be as good as on the parent plants.

The beginner should carefully select his varieties and should not let his enthusiasm lead him to buy so many that he can not properly take care of them. Every root purchased and planted should be provided with a stake on which is permanently inscribed the name of the variety. He will want to include in his selection an early, a mid-season, and a late variety of each of the three colors, white, pink, and red, and I am sure he would enjoy having, also, one of the new yellow varieties now on the market, although it will be necessary for him to invest more money in the yellow variety than in most of the others. He may be interested in knowing that there is a one hundred dollar prize offered for a new yellow Peony, and as this new Peony must be grown from seed, and as it is supposed that seed from a yellow variety is more likely to produce the color wanted, there is quite a desire among Peony owners to possess at least one yellow variety as a seed producer.

(Specimen Pages—Complete Notes Will be Mailed Upon Request)

Garden Notes

Number Twenty-two

Issued by

LEE R. BONNEWITZ

Van Wert, Ohio

GSUPPOSE this issue of my Garden Notes should be called my "Thanksgiving Edition" for my garden experiences this year, from the early start of the blooming season in April until the last Peonies bloomed in July, have been such a joy to me, in comparison with those of last year when I spent most of the time in a sanitarium, that I really am thankful that I have been blessed with renewed health and vigor. Entertaining many friends in my garden, more than in any other year, added greatly to my pleasure, and the splendid bloom of both my Irises and Peonies makes me anxious to renew the publications of my Garden Notes, especially as many of my readers have written me that they missed the issues last year and have requested me to continue their publication.

I had an ambitious schedule planned, for I had hoped to see the Irises of Southern California in April, and work up as the season advanced, through the South and the Middle-West, and return to my own garden in time to catch its story of the blooming season. But a rush of work, brought about by the purchase of a farm to provide for an expansion of my garden, coupled with the fear that my health would not hold up under such a strenuous schedule, made me defer the plan until a future season. However, I did find time to run down to Nashville on a special invitation from Mr. Connell, and later to Freeport, Illinois, where I acted as one of the Judges at an exceptionally fine Iris Show.

In Nashville, which is an Iris city of the first class (Columbus, Ohio, being the only other one in my observation which approaches it in enthusiasm for the Irises), I visited many gardens and met many interesting flower lovers. Chancellor Kirkland of the Vanderbilt University and Dr. Glenn of the same institution—both have personal gardens, the kind in which they like to work with their own hands. The Chancellor is an Iris fan and he has a splendid collection of the world's best Irises and I was particularly interested in his seedlings of Dominion parentage, because of their splendid plant growth and vigor, for vigor is what this new strain needs. The Dominion seedlings in his garden have more strength, vigor, height,

(Specimen Pages—Complete Notes Will be Mailed Upon Request)